

**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** September 13, 1999  
**TO:** John Sherrill and The Bureau of Land Files  
**FROM:** Daniel Cunningham  
**SUBJECT:** 0316000039-Cook Co.  
Calumet Container  
Sf/Tech

**Site Description**

The Calumet Container is an eleven acre former drum recycling facility. The site is located in an urban park with 90 percent of the site in Indiana and 10 percent in Illinois at 136th St. and 3631 State Line Road in Lake County, Indiana. Powerhorn Lake, Wolfe Lake and 2 mobile home parks are within a quarter mile of the site. Calumet Container a division of Steel Container Corp., operated as a drum and pail reconditioner in Hammond, Indiana from the 1960's to April 21, 1982. The facility received, stored, and recycled metal containers. The size of the containers ranged from 5 gallon pails to 55 gallon drums. Most of the containers originated from paint and graphic arts industries. In May of 1982 U.S. EPA removed 10,000 gallons of liquid and 1,345 tons of soil, sludge's and solidified wastes from the site.

**Historical Problems**

This site has posed many problems. The flow of ground water from Indiana across the state line into Illinois could be a source of contamination in Illinois groundwater. During 1982, a fire occurred at the site. Vandals also in the past have entered the grounds taking metal from drums, contaminated soil, and even a 1000 foot portion of the fence that surrounded the site. During 1986, contaminated soil was taken and used as fill dirt for residential homes. It appears that waste has been dumped and buried as well as buried drums on the site. High concentrations of xylene, toluene, phenolic's and ammonia were found in soil, sludge, surface fluid and groundwater samples collected at the site. Groundwater indicates a major source of contamination which was found to be in the conveyor area near wells w-2 and w-7 and a secondary source well w-4. At these locations nearly all organic's, metals, and inorganic contaminants were found. Well w-7 showed high concentrations of most constituents.

Beyond the boundaries of the property it was found that well-1 contained pollutants that surpassed the limits for iron, boron, and sulfate. Also, both toluene and xylene were detected in the groundwater. The following table depicts sample results taken from a study by Soil Testing Services dated 10-18-80.

**SCREEN MED**

Well Number	Sample Result
W-5	Elevated levels of phosphorus, iron, manganese and phenolic's. PH range of 8.3-9.
W-6	Levels of phenolic's, phosphorus, ammonia, and cyanide exceeded acceptable standards.
W-8, W-8, W-9A	Higher than acceptable levels for phenolic's, ammonia, boron, phosphorus, iron and manganese.

One sample was taken from Powderhorn Lake and did not show any constituents.

### **Analytical Reports**

Data Sample Taken: May 22 1980

All samples showed high concentration of xylene, and/or toluene and/or PCB's (refer to samples s503,s505-s512).

Date Sampled Taken: June 17, 1980

Monitor well G001 was sampled and it was found that toluene had concentrations of 110 ppb and 290 ppb xylene. This indicates migration of pollution from the buried barrels area to the groundwater by percolation.

Data sample taken: April 16, 1981

Well G-107

Aliphatic hydrocarbons	112,000 ppm
Toluene	25,000 ppm
Xylene	54,000 ppm
C3 Benzene	38,000 ppm
C4 Benzene	16,000 ppm

### **Site Time line**

August 30, 1978	An anonymous complainant called DWPC. Complainant said that Calumet Container was dumping wash water from drum cleaning operations into a Illinois pond and onto the ground.
March 30, 1979	IEPA enforcement sends a letter to the Attorney Generals Office citing 17 chemicals with concentrations in violation of the IEPA Act.
May 21, 22, 23, 27, 1980	Eleven monitoring wells installed.
June 3, 4, 9, 17, 1980	Finish installation of eleven monitoring wells July, 1980 A joint inspection was conducted, and in three areas samples were taken and an analysis for

heavy metals, cyanide, mercury, phenols, sulfides, and pesticides was done.

October 18, 1980	FOS took samples of MWG-107 on April 16, 1981. This liquid broke down polyethylene gloves being worn. Benzene was found in elevated concentrations at the site.
April 19, 1982	The Hammond fire dept. put out a fire at the site. Over 150 residents around the site were evacuated.
May 1982	The draft HRS score exceeds 28.5.
May 24, 1982	FOS memo stating that three drums were sampled. The labels of eight drums were also included in this document.
August 30, 1983	FOS memo, site access is uncontrolled and empty drums are scattered around the site.
June 8, 1983	Waste Management Division informs MIDCO, Inc. That CERCLA funds may be used to clean up the site. MIDCO, Inc is sited as the responsible party. MIDCO, Inc. Is given 20 days to voluntary clean up the site.
December 1985	A fence is put up around the site.
January 1986	One thousand feet of fence is stolen from around the site.
July 16, 1986	It was reported that someone was taking contaminated soil from the site to use as residential fill dirt. Soil samples taken from a Hammond, Indiana residential property found elevated levels of mercury.
February 28, 1990	The site is closed. The state of Indiana initiated a CERCLA cleanup of the site.
March 14, 1991	A consent decree was entered into. U.S. District Court for Northern Indiana State of Indiana and State of Illinois were the plaintiffs and John Jagiella is the defendant.
August 30, 1994	IEPA closed enforcement file in memorandum dated August 30, 1994.
September 5, 1996	Memo regarding telephone conversation with Indiana Department of Environmental Management. The site to this date all the drums have been cleaned up.